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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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Column Hits Senators Like Rocket

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By Drew Pearson

Sen. Bourke Hickenlooper rushed into the closed-door session of the Senate Space Committee the other day a bit late. In his hand was a column, and the Senator from Iowa had stood in his



Pearson

ve. "There is a column by Drew Pearson laying the Russians out into space ahead of Gagarin. He names names and tells just what the Russians sent up. 'CIA says' this isn't so. What about it?"

Herbert Scoville, the space expert for Central Intelligence, was testifying when Hickenlooper broke in. He looked surprised. So did other members of the Committee. Hickenlooper seemed quite indignant. So was Sen. Tom Dodd, Connecticut, Democrat, whom this writer has described as the "Democratic Joe McCarthy."

"Pearson is a congenital liar," said Dodd. "Every President in the White House has denounced him. I wouldn't believe a word he says."

Sen. Bob Kerr of Oklahoma, Chairman, got impatient and tried to change the subject.

But Hickenlooper was not satisfied. He emphasized that the Pearson column had given the names of the Russian astronauts and the approximate dates in which they had attempted their space flights.

Scoville, when pressed by Hickenlooper for an explanation of the conflict between the Pearson column and the CIA's information, main-

tained that Yuri Gagarin had been the first Russian in space.

At one point Senator Wiley of Wisconsin, Republican, complained that the discussion involved security and ought not to be talked about in haphazard fashion. Wiley also complained that he couldn't hear.

Louder, Please!

"Get closer to the microphone!" he told Scoville. "I can't hear you."

"All the microphones are turned off for security reasons," said one of the committee clerks.

Wiley was moved up closer to Scoville so he could hear.

"Unfortunately," said Sen. Steve Young of Ohio, "I haven't read the article. What troubles me is that the CIA has been making definite assertions by Pearson. There must be some basis for these assertions. Do you say that the Soviet Union never preceded the Gagarin flight, put a man in space?"

Scoville repeated that Gagarin was the first space man. Young asked whether others at the CIA might have different information. Scoville insisted that they would testify as he had.

Hickenlooper continued to pursue the subject. He indicated that something ought to be done about Pearson. Finally, Senator Magnuson of Washington entered the discussion, pointing out that the Pearson article was somewhat speculative and did not report as an absolute fact that other Russians had earlier been launched into space.

"Isn't it possible that some attempts were made by the Russians to put a man into space prior to Gagarin's flight?" asked Kerr.

"Yes, it is possible," replied Scoville.

"Well, then, if this article says that the Russians launched a man into space before Gagarin, it is a lie," said Hickenlooper.

Not in the least.

That is, Scoville said, if Hickenlooper's question is clear. The question is not clear, that the Russians reported to have launched a man straight up on a rocket as early as 1952.

The first was the World War II pilot, Alexei Leonov, who went up in a rocket in 1957 to an altitude of 200 miles and disappeared. The next was Terenty Shchennikov, who shot up in early 1958, but never came back. The next flight was attempted in January 1959 by another pilot. His rocket exploded 30 minutes after takeoff.

"None of these were attempts at orbiting around the earth," the column stated. "They were simply rocket rides, such as the first American astronaut will attempt next month."

There was, therefore, no conflict with Scoville's statement that Gagarin was the first Russian in orbit—even though the Space Committee did spend about 20 minutes over Hickenlooper's consternation.

Note—Most important revelation at the space meeting was the fact that the United States had taken TV photographs of Yuri Gagarin in his space capsule. He was only about 200 miles up and it was fairly easy for a U.S. satellite TV station to photograph him.

U.S. Guerrillas—Secretary

Defense McNamara will start developing a deadly guerrilla warfare branch to equal the Russian. The plan is to develop a corps of specialists in sabotage, bombings, arson, and other tactics. In turn, the U.S. will train guerrillas in other countries to overthrow the Iron and Bamboo curtains. The strategy is to "take the Communist left wing out of the game" in the same kind of way that the Reds have been operating in Western nations. The idea is to show Moscow that it can't play at this kind of game in the Balkans, Hungary, and even Russia.

Castro's Invasion—A Castro agent is believed to have tipped off Fidel Castro about the invasion. Cuban planes and tanks were waiting for the invaders when they hit the beach. The CIA never told the troops about the invasion and what beach they would land on until just before the landings. Yet when they got there, they walked right into a trap. Clearly, Castro let the men embark into landing craft and start putting supplies ashore before he opened up with all he had.

Crime Clean-up—Attorney General Kennedy will set up permanent racket squads to combat organized crime in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami. He has ordered U.S. attorneys to give priority to probing organized crime in Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco and Tucson. Finally, Kennedy will form a 25-man mobile squad to move into any city where help is needed to prosecute the monsters.

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